



STATE REPRESENTATIVE SHERRY APPLETON



23rd DISTRICT 2007 SESSION UPDATE

Dear Neighbors,

The 2007 Legislative Session is off to an amazing start. Though the session has only begun, input from our community has played an integral part in decisions being made. I have wasted no time introducing legislation and voting on bills based on your concerns.

This year we have both the duty and opportunity to modernize education, increase access to health care, and bolster the local economy. Although we made progress last session, I know we can do better. I would like to update you about the legislation and issues I am working on.

Enclosed in this update is information pertinent to Kitsap neighborhoods. Ferry fares, polluted shellfish beds, and health insurance costs are some of the issues that hit our pocketbooks or affect our way of life.

Please take some time to review the information. Please let me know what issues are important to you and what ideas you have for making our state a better place to work and live.

Sincerely,

Sherry



SHELLFISH PROTECTION DISTRICTS

Shellfish farming is an important component of our shoreline economy. Failing septic systems, storm water run-off and agricultural wastes are among the several sources of pollution that continue to threaten shellfish farming and harvesting.

To give counties the tools to better address these problems, I've introduced legislation (HB 1595) to create shellfish protection districts.

Shellfish protection programs adopted in these districts would help protect water quality with measures designed to address sewage and stormwater pollution and educate the public on how they can help reduce pollution.



KEEPING THE FERRIES AFLOAT

Our community is uniquely dependent on the ferry system. We use the ferries to get to and from work, keep medical appointments, and to receive goods and supplies. Ferries connect our communities and are necessary for our way of life, and we all feel the impact when fares increase.

The state ferry system has faced growing financial issues in recent years — rising diesel fuel prices, funding cuts resulting from initiatives, increased labor costs — and as a result fares have jumped 67 percent in six years.

It is clear that the ferry system is in desperate need of a more robust, dedicated funding stream. This is why I am proposing that an additional half-cent of state gas tax money go to ferry operations. This will generate \$35 million per biennium and help keep fares from rising further.

Washington state ferries are an integral part of the state highway system. It only makes sense for the ferry system to receive a fair portion of gas tax money to keep it afloat.



HEALTH SECURITY TRUST

Lack of affordable health insurance is reaching the crisis stage in our state.

More than 600,000 Washington residents have no health care coverage and emergency rooms and doctors' offices are closing.

I have introduced legislation to simplify health care financing, eliminate inherent administrative waste and thereby creating sufficient savings to extend health care coverage to all residents.

HB 1886 creates a single financing entity called the Washington Health Security Trust. Among its most notable goals, the trust will:

- Provide fair, simple and accountable health care financing for all.
- Make health care coverage independent from employment.
- Preserve choice of providers for Washington residents.
- Keep clinical decisions in the hands of health professionals and patients.

All Washington residents over 18 participating in the plan would pay a health care premium of \$75 a month and covered health care would include:

- Hospital care
- Emergency services
- Speech, occupational and physical therapy
- Mental health services
- Hospice
- Vision and hearing care
- Prescription drugs



SIGNATURE GATHERERS

No doubt about it, signature gathering has become big business in our state.

When our state was formed, the powers of initiative and referendum were reserved for the people. The intention was to give the people a check on the Legislature — if lawmakers did something to inspire enough grassroots passion, citizens could gather signatures and put the issue on the ballot.

Fast forward 100 years and things are much different. Initiative campaigns spend hundreds of thousands of dollars on professional signature gatherers while legitimate grassroots efforts are a thing of the past. And petitions riddled with fraudulent signatures are becoming more common.

To help curb some of the temptation to forge signatures by paid signature gatherers, I have introduced legislation to prohibit paying signature gatherers on a per-signature basis. Rather, signature gatherers must be paid on an hourly or salary basis.



KEEPING BAINBRIDGE'S UNIQUE FEEL

Controlling growth is an issue that uniquely affects Bainbridge Island. There is only so much water to go around in Bainbridge's aquifer and current law ignores this fact.

To address this issue, I introduced legislation to give greater control to Bainbridge for future planning decisions and to take limited water supplies into future growth decisions. The bill has passed out of committee and now awaits floor action.

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WASL EXEMPTION FOR MILITARY FAMILIES

Children in military families face unique challenges. They often change schools and school districts when their mothers or fathers are reassigned. In addition to making new friends and fitting into a new school, these kids also face a new curriculum and in our state, they must take Washington’s graduation test, the WASL.

Imagine a 10th-grader moving to Washington for the first time. Most students in Washington start preparing for the WASL in the 4th grade but this 10th -grader must pass the high stakes WASL with little or no preparation. To me, this simply isn’t fair.

This is why I am proposing we exempt kids in military families from having to pass the WASL to graduate from high school. Military families are sacrificing more and more everyday, it’s time we helped them.



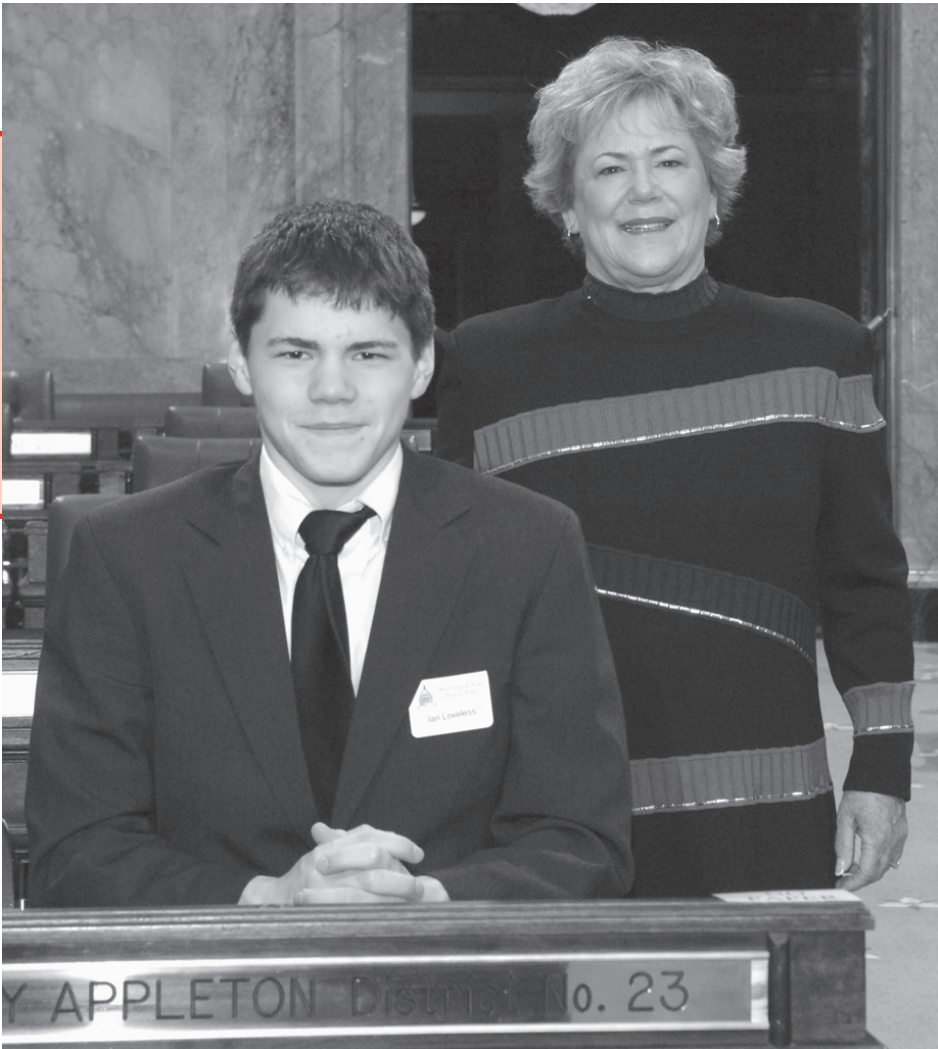
PAYDAY LENDING

It seems like everywhere you look new payday lending shops are popping up, especially around military bases. This year I am proposing to reign in some of the more egregious business practices employed by payday lenders who target soldiers, sailors, and people with few banking options.

My legislation will:

- Cap loans at 36% – for all consumers.
- Ban intimidation or harassment of military personnel.
- Allow members of the military to enter into a payment plan with lenders.
- Allow loans to go into deferment when a member of the military is deployed.
- Require disclosure of the full cost of the loan.

Since 9/11 members of the military and their families have endured tremendous stress and burdens. Soldiers and sailors deserved to be treated with respect by all members of the community, including payday lenders.



The Legislative Page program is open to students ages 14-16. In January, Ian Loveless from Bremerton spent a week in Olympia serving as my page. I still have a few slots left so if you know any students who might be interested, please have them contact my office.

★ **TOWN HALLS!** ★

March 17-18 are this year’s Legislative Town Hall days. Please check your local papers to find the town hall meeting near you.

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